

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 00586 072159Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 DLOS-09 OES-07 HA-05 ARA-10 EA-10
IO-13 DRC-01 /138 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 670

INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 586

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 586 VICE 545)

YAOUNDE FOR MARCUS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, TP, GB

SUBJ: SAO TOME SECURITY SITUATION

REF: LIBREVILLE 448

1. CHARGE AND DESK OFFICER MARCUS VISITED SAO TOME FEBRUARY 27
AND FEBRUARY 28. ISLAND WAS CALM AND THERE NO EVIDENCE OF
UNUSUAL MILITARY ACTIVITY. ONLY SPECIAL SECURITY MEASURE
APPARENT WAS NIGHTTIME ESTABLISHMENT ROADBLOCKS BY UNARMED
LOCAL COMMITTEES CIVILIANS GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY
IN AREAS NEAR THEIR HOMES. GSTP AUTOMOBILE IN WHICH WE WERE
RIDING PASS EIGHT ROADBLOCKS DURING 18 KILOMETER POST-
DINNER DRIVE FROM CITY TO BOA VISTA HOTEL.

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PAGE 02 LIBREV 00586 072159Z

2. FOREIGN MINISTER LEONEL D'ALVA, IN RESPONSE CHARGE'S
INQUIRY, STATED THAT SECURITY PROBLEM REMAINS. HE WOULD
NOT, HOWEVER, BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN TO STATE THAT THERE
WERE FREQUENT VIOLATIONS STP TERRITORIAL WATERS(HE
SAID GSTP CLAIMED 210 NAUTICAL MILES) AND AIRSPACE.
D'ALVA SEEMED SOMEWHAT BEMUSED BY REPORT THAT GABONESE

PRESIDENT BONGO HAD PUT TROOPS ON ALERT IN RESPONSE STP PRESIDENT DACOSTA'S APPEAL. D'ALVA STATE APPEAL WAS TO BONGO AS HEAD OF OAU AND NOT AS PRESIDENT OF GABON. THE CLEAR IMPRESSION GIVEN WAS THAT STP AND GOG REMAIN ON RELATIVELY UNFRIENDLY TERMS.

3. SWEDISH AMBASSADOR KAI FALKMAN (RESIDENT IN LUANDA), WHO HAD PRESENTED CREDENTIALS FEBRUARY 27, STATED THAT PRESIDENT DA COSTA SPENT GOOD PORTION THEIR PRIVATE DISCUSSION WORRYING ABOUT THREATS FROM UNSPECIFIED HOSTILE SOURCES OFF THE COAST. DACOSTA HIMSELF, HOWEVER, ACTS RELATIVELY UNCONCERNED. WE MET HIM ON THE ROAD DRIVING HIS OWN CAR WITH NO SECURITY IN HIS VEHICLE ALTHOUGH IT WAS FOLLOWED BY A SECOND CAR CONTAINING FOUR ARMED GUARDS WHICH IS ABOUT HIS USUAL ACCOMPANIMENT.

4. WE ALSO OBSERVED SMALL CAMOUFLAGE-PAINTED ANGOLAN PLANE AT AIRPORT FEBRUARY 27 AND SIX ANGOLANS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING IN TOWN. AIRCRAFT AND ANGOLANS DEPARTED AROUND NOON FEBRUARY 28.

5. COMMENT: GABONESE-STP RELATIONS REPORTEDLY BEGANTO SOUR DURING OAU MINISTERIAL MEETINGS PRECEDING 1977 OAU SUMMIT IN GABON WHEN STP DELEGATE SUPPORTED BENIN IN ITS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST GABON IN LAST JANUARY'S MERCENARY RAID ON CONTONOU. GSTP PRESIDENT DACOSTA SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LIBREV 00586 072159Z

REFUSED TO ATTEND OAU SUMMIT WHICH ALSO MIFFED BONGO AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER SCHEDULED AIR GABON FLIGHTS TO SAO TOME WERE DROPPED AS "UNECONOMICAL." PRESENCE IN LIBREVILLE OF FORMER MINISTER OF HEALTH DR. CARLOS DAGRACA APPARENTLY FUELS GSTP SUSPICIONS GABON AIDING ANTI-GSTP REGIME OPPOSITION. ALTHOUGH HE WAS TOO DISCREET TO SAY SO, FROM THE WAY SWEDISH AMBASSADOR KAI FALKMAN ASKED ABOUT DAGRACA, IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT DACOSTA SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED HIM AS A THREAT. IN NOVEMBER 1977 A HANDFUL OF SAO TOMEANS BRIBED STP BOAT CREW AND FLED TO GABON. ALTHOUGH BONGO RETURNED THE BOAT, HE GRANTED "ASYLUM" TO THE ESCAPEES. BONGO ALSO STOOD UP STP DELEGATION TO DISCUSS SITUATION BY ABSENTING HIMSELF IN FRANCEVILLE WHILE THE DELEGATION SAT IN LIBREVILLE WAITING FOR THE PREVIOUSLY GRANTED APPOINTMENT. BONGO HAS SUBSEQUENTLY MENTIONED TO CHARGE THREAT OF SOVIET-CUBAN TAKEOVER IN SAO TOME AND THAT HE IS TAKING IN REFUGEES FLEEING FROM "REPRESSION" ON THE ISLANDS. THE REPRESSION IS NOT AS EVIDENT AS BONGO WOULD HAVE ONE BELIEVE. ALTHOUGH CUBANS, CHINESE, SOVIETS, EAST GERMANS, AND NORTH KOREANS ARE ALL READILY VISIBLE ON THE ISLAND, NO MEMBER OF THIS EMBASSY HAS NOTED ANY TYPE OF REPRESSION IN SOA TOME DURING A SERIES OF VISITS OVER

THE PAST SEVEN MONTHS. YATES

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